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ABSTRACT

Data collected from 36 different markets and 82 research reports were used to compare the readers of morning and evening newspapers. Patterns across markets revealed morning newspaper readers are more likely than evening newspaper readers to have white-collar occupations, to be better educated, and to have no children under 18 years of age present in the home; (2) evening newspaper readers are more likely than morning newspaper readers to have lower incomes, to be married, and to be female; (3) morning newspaper readers are more likely than evening newspaper readers to be retired; (4) readers of the dominant newspaper are more likely to be subscribers than are readers of the nondominant newspaper; (5) readers of the dominant newspaper are more likely than readers of the nondominant newspaper to read the Sunday newspaper; (6) length of residence in the community does not consistently distinguish morning from evening readers; (7) evening readers appear to have greater interest in "soft news" items than morning readers; (8) readers of the dominant newspaper have a greater interest in sports news than readers of the nondominant newspaper in the market; and (9) evening newspaper readers evaluate their newspaper lower on more attitude/image/evaluation ratings than do morning newspaper readers. (HOD)

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American Newspaper Publishers Association

ANPA NEWS RESEARCH REPORT

FROM THE ANPA NEWS RESEARCH CENTER No. 38 Nov. 19, 1982

A REPORT FOR EDITORS PROVIDED IN COORDINATION WITH THE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP COUNCIL

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An NRC Mining Company Report

Morning and Evening Daily Newspaper Readers

By Elsa Mohn

HIGHLIGHTS: This report reviews 82 proprietary research reports from 36 markets containing both a morning and an evening daily newspaper. The patterns across these markets reveal that the morning newspaper reader is more likely than the evening newspaper reader to hold a white-collar occupation, to be better educated and to have no children under 18 years of age living in the household. Other patterns reveal that evening readers have a stronger interest or greater readership of "soft" news items and rate their newspaper lower than the morning newspaper readers on a variety of attitudinal/image ratings.

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NRC Mining Company

The data files on most newspaper research operations are an untapped gold mine of information about newspaper readership. The purpose of the NRC Mining Company is to refine and extract this valuable information from accumulated ore and make it available to editors, publishers and newspaper researchers.

Its been said that many of the empty categories in ANPA's extensive review of the readership research completed over the past 25 years (ANPA News Research Reports No. 3 and No. 22) could be filled with information from existing research data—if only someone had the time to hunt it down and to analyze it.

But in the press of everyday concerns, the data from a study is analyzed to meet the immediate questions at hand and then filed away. For example, a simple survey with 20 questions yields 190 two-way cross-tabulations, far more than typically analyzed or reported.

To remedy this situation, at least in part, the NRC Mining Company has begun the work of collecting and organizing this research. More than 300 proprietary research reports have been obtained so far.

This summary, comparing the readers of morning and evening newspapers, is the first in a series of literature reviews being prepared from these materials. Succeeding reports will review the research on subscribers and non-subscribers and on regular and occasional readers.

Morning and Evening Daily Newspaper Readers

By Elsa Mohn

Elsa Mohn is a doctoral student in mass communications at the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and a research assistant for the ANPA News Research Center. *The study was funded by the Newspaper Readership Council.*

Something has been happening with morning and evening daily newspapers. And, this something has been happening for some time:

- There were 51 more morning daily newspapers and 24 fewer evening daily newspapers in the United States in 1980 than there were in 1970.[1]

- During the same decade, morning circulation has increased more than two and one half million and evening circulation has decreased two and one half million.[2]

- In the last few years, 25 evening newspapers converted to morning publications,[3] and these conversions are not expected to cease.[4]

- Regardless of whether the market is competitive or not, or whether the morning or evening newspaper is the dominant newspaper in the market, the morning newspaper is more likely to show circulation gains.[5]

Although communities of every size and newspapers of every size are starting to show traces of these trends,[6] these patterns were first thought to apply only to large city operations that produced both a morning and evening daily newspaper:

> The problems of the big city afternoon newspapers are the problems of the cities.[7]

> What is there about the big city that's giving the evening newspaper such a hard time? . . . the decline of the center city . . . The fact is that the logistics of newspaper publishing make it possible for the morning newspaper to be delivered to (the suburbs and beyond), difficult for the evening newspaper to do . . . The morning newspaper brings its first edition off the press in the middle of the night . . . The evening newspaper is the one that gets ink on your hands, hot off the press. We expect it to wait for the latest political headlines, stock prices and sports scores and rush them to us at the end of the day.[8]

However, it is not only the logistics of delivery that is a unique trouble to publishers of evening newspapers. There also is the problem of the evening newspaper being able to contain fresh, timely news. This fresh, timely news problem was one of the reasons for conversion given by newspapers that switched from evening to morning publications.[9] Many of these evening-turned-morning publications are located in smaller one newspaper towns. If newspapers of this size have problems with getting fresh, timely news in an evening edition, the problem can only be worse for evening newspapers in larger markets, where deadlines must come earlier to leave more time for distribution.

Nonetheless, newspaper reading behavior, be it reading of the morning or evening edition, is a habit, and all habits are hard to break, especially when their performance provides some sort of reinforcement or gratification to the one performing the behavior. Newspaper reading also is one of those habits that is passed down through the generations.[10] However, at least one study suggests the morning newspaper reading habit is transmitted more strongly to the next generation than the evening newspaper reading habit.[11] The circulation trends also suggest that the evening newspaper reading habit is easier to break than is the morning newspaper one.

This report takes a look at who these readers of morning and evening newspapers are and examines some possible reasons for their choices.

Summary of Findings

- Morning newspaper readers are more likely than evening newspaper readers to have white-collar occupations, to be better educated, and to have no children under 18 years of age present in the home. These patterns are evident *regardless* of whether the morning or evening newspaper is the major newspaper in the market.

- Evening newspaper readers are more likely than morning newspaper readers to have lower incomes, to be married, and to be female. These patterns are present *only* in evening-dominant newspaper markets.

- Morning newspaper readers are more likely than evening newspaper readers to be retired. This pattern is evident *only* in morning-dominant newspaper markets.

- Readers of the dominant newspaper are more likely to be subscribers than are readers of the non-dominant newspaper. This pattern is particularly evident in evening-dominant markets.

- Readers of the dominant newspaper are more likely than readers of the nondominant newspaper to read the Sunday newspaper.

- Length of residence in the community does not consistently distinguish morning from evening readers.

- Evening readers appear to have greater interest in "soft news" items than morning readers.

- Readers of the dominant newspaper have a greater interest in sports news than readers of the nondominant newspaper in the market.

- Evening newspaper readers evaluate their newspaper lower on more attitude/image/evaluation ratings than do morning newspaper readers.

Sources of Data

These results are based on data from 36 different markets where the reader has a choice of reading either a morning or evening newspaper. Very few of these markets are in competitive situations where the morning and evening newspapers are owned and operated by separate companies.

Table 1 shows where these markets are located in the United States and their population. Twenty-one are morning-dominant newspaper markets (that is, more people buy the morning daily than buy the evening daily), and 15 are evening-dominant ones. For all studies, the largest geographic area surveyed was the SMSA (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area). Of the 82 research reports evaluated, 47 were from morning-dominant newspaper markets and 35 were from evening-dominant ones.

Although these 36 markets and 82 research reports by no means comprise a random sample of all markets supporting both a morning and evening daily newspaper, the patterns that emerge here nonetheless shed important light on the readership of morning and evening daily newspapers.

Analysis. The unit of analysis in this report is either a *market* or a *finding*. A market was used as the unit of analysis whenever possible. For instance, the portions of the report dealing with demographics, subscribing behavior, Sunday newspaper readership and length of residence in the community all use the *market* as the unit of analysis because these categories were fairly consistent across all studies.

The portions of the report dealing with content preferences and evaluations of newspapers use a *finding* as the unit of analysis because there was very little consistency from market to market on the particular items asked.

Dual newspaper readers are included as both morning readers and evening readers, since most research reports did not separate these people out.

Example of Market Representing the Unit of Analysis. One morning-dominant market supplied these 1980 age profiles of its morning and evening newspaper readers:

	Read morning paper yesterday	Read evening paper yesterday
18-34 years old	37%	52%
35-49 years old	27%	18%
50 years and older	36%	30%
	100%	100%

Clearly, for this market, morning readers are older than evening readers (or evening readers are younger than morning readers).

Table 1

Number of Markets in Sample

	Morning-Dominant Newspaper Markets			Evening-Dominant Newspaper Markets		
	Population of Metropolitan Area			Population of Metropolitan Area		
Area of United States	100,000 to less than 500,000	500,000 to less than 1,000,000	Over 1,000,000	100,000 to less than 500,000	500,000 to less than 1,000,000	Over 1,000,000
East	---	2	---	1	---	---
West	2	1	3	---	---	---
Midwest	3	---	---	5	1	4
South	3	6	1	1	3	---

Example of Finding Representing the Unit of Analysis. One evening dominant market supplied these 1980 content preferences of its morning and evening newspaper readers:

Regularly read	Read morning paper yesterday	Read evening paper yesterday
Local news	72%	72%
National and international news	71%	69%
Food pages	44%	54%
Sports section	42%	44%
Lifestyle section	40%	51%
Business pages	39%	43%
Classified advertising	28%	42%

Clearly, for this particular evening-dominant market, morning and evening readers are equally likely to read local news, national and international news, sports news and the business pages. Evening readers, however, have higher readership of two types of soft news (food and lifestyle) and classified advertising. This market contributes seven findings, one relating to each type of content.

Readership Trends

Twenty-two newspaper markets supplied readership data for at least two points in time. Regardless of which newspaper is dominant in the market, it is the evening newspaper which is the most likely either to have lost more readership or gained less readership than the morning newspaper. Eight of the 12 morning-dominant markets and eight of the 10 evening-dominant newspaper markets show this pattern.

Table 2 shows the differences in the range of readership for morning and evening newspapers. In 19 markets where the morning newspaper is dominant, the morning newspaper readership ranged from 4% to 49% higher than that of the evening paper. In 15 evening-dominant markets the evening newspaper readership exceeded that of the morning newspaper by 1% to 36%. Although not statistically significant, the mean difference is larger in morning-dominant markets than in evening-dominant ones (19.6% v. 15.8%). Thus, if the nondominant newspaper in the market is an A.M., its readership is closer to that of the dominant P.M. than if the nondominant newspaper in the market is a P.M.

Table 2

Differences in Readership of Morning and Evening Newspapers

	Morning-Dominant Newspaper Markets	Evening-Dominant Newspaper Markets
Minimum difference	4%	1%
Maximum difference	49%	36%
Mean difference	19.6%	15.8%
	19 Markets	15 Markets

The readership patterns of the markets in this sample point to the same basic conclusions as the circulation data: the more secure position of the morning newspaper in the market.

Demographics That Distinguish Morning and Evening Newspaper Readers, Regardless of Which Newspaper is Dominant in the Market

White-Collar Occupation. The morning reader is more likely than the evening reader to have a white-collar occupation, regardless of which newspaper is dominant in the market.

In the earlier years (1971 to 1977), having a white-collar position did not distinguish morning and evening daily newspaper readers. In the majority of markets that provided this information from 1978 on, however, Table 3, line A, shows that it is the morning reader who is more likely than the evening reader to hold a white-collar position (or for the chief wage earner in the household to hold a white-collar position).

Six of the morning-dominant markets and four of the evening-dominant ones supplied this demographic profile for their readers during both time periods. Comparisons of these reports emphasize the growing white-collar readership of morning newspapers.

Five of the six morning-dominant markets show their morning reader is more likely than their evening reader to hold a white-collar position. And, of these five, four have shown a shift (three previously indicated the evening reader was more likely to hold a white-collar position and the other market did not show any differences in earlier years).

A similar situation is evident for evening-dominant markets: three of the four markets providing this trend data on occupation profiles show that in later years it is the morning reader who is more likely than the evening reader to hold a white-collar position. Two of these three markets have shown a shift.

Another broad-scale investigation of the relationship between occupation and circulation of morning and evening newspapers also has been conducted.[12] This analysis correlated the proportions of A.M. and P.M. circulation with blue-collar/white-

Table 3

Demographic Profiles of Morning and Evening Newspaper Readers

Regardless of which paper is dominant in the market		Demographic is More Characteristic of: A.M. Readers	P.M. Readers	No Difference	Demographic is More Characteristic of: A.M. Readers	P.M. Readers	No Difference
A. White collar occupation	1971-77	5	6	1	1	2	2
	1978 on	10	2	---	7	1	1
B. More formal education	1971-77	4	3	6	4	1	2
	1978 on	11	2	3	9	---	---
C. Smaller family sizes	1971-77	5	3	5	3	---	3
	1978 on	10	3	2	6	2	---
D. No children present	1971-77	4	2	1	1	---	1
	1978 on	5	---	1	3	---	1
E. Younger adults	1971-77	1	9	4	1	3	1
	1978 on	5	10	2	2	5	1
For evening dominant markets ONLY							
F. Higher household income	1971-77	6	5	3	3	2	2
	1978 on	6	5	6	6	2	1
G. Being married	1971-77	3	3	4	2	1	1
	1978 on	5	3	4	2	6	1
H. Sex (male)	1971-77	4	4	5	4	---	2
	1978 on	5	5	4	6	1	2
For morning dominant markets ONLY							
I. Being retired	1971-77	4	1	5	2	---	1
	1978 on	8	2	3	2	3	5

NOTE: Numbers in table represent the number of markets.

collar occupations for 30 points in time in a national trend analysis and also correlated these proportions for 28 SMSA's for 1974 and 29 SMSA's for 1979.

Table 4 displays the results of this national trend analysis, showing that morning circulation and white-collar work force proportions have been growing similarly during the last 30 years. This is directly opposite the decline in evening circulation and the blue-collar work force. The correlation between the proportion of the circulation of daily newspapers delivered in the morning and the proportion of the work force employed in white-collar positions is .86 ($p < .0001$), whereas the correlation between the proportion of the circulation of daily newspapers that are evening delivered and the proportion of the work force employed in white-collar positions is -.87 ($p < .0001$).

The results of the SMSA analysis appear in Table 5. Notice that 1974 work force proportions have been correlated with 1975, 1976, 1980 and 1981 circulation proportions. The 1979 work force data have been correlated with 1980 and 1981 circulation data. The two occupation proportions were correlated with subsequent circulation data because it was thought that the impact of occupational shifts on circulation might not be felt in the same year.

Note that the 1980 and 1981 circulation data correlate slightly better with the most proximate occupation data. While the coincidence of these occupation and circulation correlations is not overwhelming, all correlations are in the direction one would expect.

Additional analysis of the SMSA data found that those SMSA's with the greatest increases over time in the proportion of white-collar workers are also those SMSA's with the greatest increase in the proportion of morning newspaper circulation ($r = .26$, $p. < .20$). Similarly, changes in the proportion of blue-collar workers correspond to increases in the proportion of evening newspaper circulation ($r = .27$, $p < .19$).

Table 4

Pearson Correlations for National Circulation and Occupation Trends
(n = 30 years, 1950-1979)

	% Morning Circulation	% Evening Circulation	% White-collar Occupation
% White-collar occupation	.86*	-.86*	
% Blue-collar occupation	-.87*	.87*	-.96*

*p < .0001

Note: A correlation analysis yields a number that indicates whether there is a relationship between two variables and how strong the relationship is between the two variables, the number a correlation analysis yields ranges from "-1.00" to "+1.00" A "+1.00" means there is a perfect positive correlation between the two variables, or as one variable increases in value the other variables do exactly the same thing. A "-1.00" means there is a perfect negative or inverse relationship between the two variables, as one variable goes up or down the other variable does just the opposite. The greater the correlation, the stronger the relationship. A correlation that approaches ".00" means there is no relationship.

Table 5

Pearson Correlations for SMSA Circulation and Occupation Trends
(n = 28 SMSA's for 1974 and n = 29 SMSA's for 1979)

	White-collar Occupation		Blue-collar Occupation	
	1974	1979	1974	1979
1975 Morning circulation	.12	---	-.15	---
Evening circulation	-.17	---	.19	---
1976 Morning circulation	.27*	---	-.29*	---
Evening circulation	-.29*	---	.29*	---
1980 Morning circulation	.22	.26*	-.24	-.27*
Evening circulation	-.21	-.26*	.24	.27*
1981 Morning circulation	.21	.27*	-.24	-.28*
Evening circulation	-.21	-.26*	.24	.27*

*p < .20

More Years of Formal Education. Morning readers are more likely than evening readers to have more years of formal education, regardless of which daily newspaper is dominant in the market.

Again, this pattern is not evident across markets for data supplied in the earlier years. But of the 16 morning-dominant markets supplying this data from 1978 on, 11 show a tendency for morning readers to be better educated than evening readers. Further, all of the nine evening-dominant markets with later data show this pattern (see Table 3, line B).

Of the six morning-dominant markets supplying education profiles of their morning and evening readers for both time periods, four show higher education is more characteristic of morning readers in the later years. Two of these markets previously indicated the evening reader was more likely than the morning reader to have more years of formal education.

All three of the evening markets supplying education profiles of their readers for both time periods indicated that in the later time period the morning reader was more likely than the evening reader to have more years of formal education.

Smaller Family Size. Living in households with a smaller family size is more characteristic of the morning daily newspaper reader than of the evening one, regardless of which newspaper is dominant in the market.

As can be seen from Table 3, line C, this pattern again is evident only for later data. Ten of the 15 morning-dominant markets show this tendency for morning readers to have smaller family sizes, and six of the eight evening-dominant daily markets show this tendency for their morning readers.

Nine morning-dominant markets supplied family size profiles of their readers for both points in time. Of these, seven indicate in later years that the family size of morning readers is generally smaller than the family size of the evening readers. Of these seven, two markets consistently show the morning reader to have a smaller family size and five markets show a switch: three markets previously indicated the evening reader had a smaller family size and two markets previously indicated family size did not distinguish morning and evening daily newspaper readers.

Four of the five evening-dominant markets supplying this data for both time periods indicate that at the later time period it was the morning reader who was more likely to live in a household with fewer people than the evening reader.

Having No Children Under 18 Years of Age Present in the Home. Having no children under 18 years of age living in the household is more characteristic of morning newspaper readers than of evening newspaper readers, regardless of which newspaper is dominant in the market.

As can be seen from Table 3, line D, this is especially evident for later data. Five of the six morning-

dominant markets and three of the four evening-dominant markets supplying this information for 1978 on indicate the morning reader is more likely than the evening reader to have no children under 18 years of age present in the home.

All of the markets supplying data for both time periods show that in the later time period the morning reader is more likely than the evening reader to live in a household with no children under 18 years of age.

Younger Readers. The younger reader is more characteristic of the evening reader than the morning daily newspaper, regardless of which daily is dominant in the market.

As Table 3, line E indicates, this pattern is as evident for the earlier time period as it is for the later time period.

Nine of the 14 morning morning-dominant markets supplying age profiles of their readers from between 1971 and 1977 show the evening reader more likely to be younger than the morning reader. Ten of the 17 morning-dominant markets supplying later data also show the evening reader is more likely to be younger than the morning daily newspaper readers.

The same situation is apparent for evening-dominant markets: three of the five markets supplying age profiles from between 1971 and 1977 indicate the evening reader is younger than the morning reader. And, five of the eight evening-dominant markets supplying later data indicate the same pattern.

Nine morning-dominant markets and four evening-dominant markets supplied age profiles of their readers for the two points in time. The changes in the age profiles occurring through time for these markets are not consistent. Of the five morning-dominant markets indicating in early years that evening readers are more likely to be younger, two of these in later years indicate the reverse. For the evening-dominant markets, three markets in the early years indicated evening readers were younger, but two of these in later years indicate that the morning reader is more likely to be younger than the evening reader. In short, the age distinction between morning and evening newspaper readers is equivocal.

Demographics That Distinguish Morning and Evening Readers in Evening-Dominant Newspaper Markets ONLY

Higher Household Annual Income. Higher household incomes appear to be more characteristic of morning readers in evening-dominant markets. No patterns emerge for morning-dominant newspaper markets.

Of the nine evening-dominant markets supplying income profiles of their readers from 1978 on, six indicate the morning reader is more likely than the evening reader to have a higher household annual income. No patterns emerge for the earlier data supplied by evening-dominant daily markets (Table 3, line F).

Among the eight morning-dominant markets supplying income profiles of their readers for both points in time, five markets maintain the demographic profiles exhibited in the earlier years. Of the six evening-dominant markets supplying this data for both time periods, four indicate it is the morning reader in later years who is more likely to have a higher annual household income. Of these four, two markets show the morning reader having a higher income for both time periods.

Being Married. In evening-dominant markets, the evening reader is more likely to be married than the morning reader. No patterns emerge for morning-dominant markets.

Table 3, line G, shows that in six of the nine evening-dominant markets evening readers are more likely to be married. This pattern is only evident for the later data.

Six morning-dominant markets and three evening-dominant ones supplied marital status profiles of their morning and evening readers for both points in time. No particular patterns of change occur for the morning-dominant markets, where three of the six present the same demographic patterns for the morning and evening readers for both time periods.

Of the three evening-dominant markets, two show that in the later time period evening readers are more likely to be married than are morning readers.

Male. In evening-dominant markets, the morning newspaper reader is more likely to be male. In morning-dominant markets, there are no patterns.

Four of the six evening-dominant markets supplying data from between 1971 and 1977 and six of the nine evening-dominant markets supplying data from 1978 on also indicate that morning readers are more likely to be male than are evening newspaper readers.

Of the four evening-dominant markets supplying sex profiles of their readers for both time periods, three show that in the later time period the morning readership is more likely to contain a higher proportion of men than the evening readership.

Demographics That Distinguish Morning and Evening Readers in Morning-Dominant Newspaper Markets ONLY

Retired Persons. Being retired is more characteristic of morning readers in morning-dominant daily newspaper markets. No patterns emerge for evening-dominant markets.

Table 3, line I, shows that in eight of the 13 morning-dominant newspaper markets supplying data from 1978 on, the morning reader is more likely than the evening reader to be retired. This pattern is not as evident for earlier data nor are any retirement patterns evident for evening-dominant markets.

Of the eight morning-dominant markets supplying data for both time periods, five show in the later time period that morning readers are more likely than evening readers to be retired. Two of these five markets show a switch in this demographic profile.

Demographic Characteristics That Do NOT Distinguish Morning and Evening Daily Newspaper Readers

Race. There are no patterns for the racial/ethnic profiles of morning and evening daily newspaper readers. This conclusion is based on data from 43 market reports.

Home Ownership. Home ownership status does not distinguish morning and evening readers consistently for either morning-dominant or evening-dominant daily newspaper markets, according to 36 reports examined.

Dwelling Type (Single-Family Dwelling). Dwelling type does not consistently characterize morning and evening daily newspaper readers for any type of market. Thirty-three reports were examined.

Length of Residence. Length of residence in the community generally distinguishes morning from evening readers in both morning- and evening-dominant newspaper markets. However, it does not consistently distinguish morning and evening readers across all markets. That is, very few markets indicate the length of residence of morning and evening readers is virtually the same. Yet there are about as many markets indicating morning readers are more likely to have lived in the area longer as there are markets indicating evening readers are more likely to have lived in the area longer.

Subscribing Behavior

The dominant newspaper in the market is the newspaper most likely to be subscribed to by its readers. This is particularly true in evening-dominant markets.

In evening-dominant markets, the evening reader is more likely to subscribe to his respective newspaper than the morning reader is to subscribe to his respective newspaper. All 12 of the studies supplied by evening-dominant markets that contained subscribing behavior show this tendency.

The same pattern is also evident in morning-dominant markets: morning readers are more likely than evening readers to subscribe to their respective newspapers. Of the 12 morning dominant markets providing subscribing information for both their morning and evening readers, five indicate morning readers are more likely to subscribe to their respective newspaper than are evening readers, three show evening readers are more likely to subscribe to their respective (nondominant) newspaper, and four markets indicate the subscribing levels of morning and evening readers are about the same.

Sunday Newspaper Readership

The patterns of Sunday newspaper readership

Table 6

Number of Content Preferences

	Morning-Dominant Newspaper Markets		Evening-Dominant Newspaper Markets		All Markets	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Content preferred by morning readers	70	23	64	50	134	37
Content preferred by evening readers	98	32	48	37	146	35
Content equally preferred by both morning and evening readers	141	46	17	13	158	36
	309 findings	100%	129 findings	100%	438 findings	100%

among morning and evening newspaper readers is similar to the subscribing patterns of daily readers. That is, the reader of the dominant newspaper is more likely to read the Sunday newspaper than is the reader of the non-dominant newspapers.

In morning-dominant newspaper markets, the morning reader is more likely than the evening reader to read the Sunday newspaper. Of the 31 studies provided by morning-dominant markets, 18 show morning readers are more likely to read the Sunday newspaper, one shows evening readers are more likely to read the Sunday newspaper and 12 show that Sunday newspaper readership is about the same for morning and evening newspaper readers.

In evening-dominant markets, the evening reader is more likely than the morning reader to read the Sunday newspaper. Eleven of the 14 studies provided by evening-dominant markets show this tendency.

Content Readership/Interests/Preferences

One of the reasons frequently given by publishers of newspapers that have switched from P.M. to A.M. is that morning newspapers, by virtue of their publication time, can carry fresher news or more timely news.[1] This time advantage is particularly important for late-breaking news (both national and local) and sports events. The publishers also cite many internal reasons why this change is more convenient for them, but it is their belief that this change also will be well received by their readers. Few of these publishers indicate disappointment with their decision to switch.[1]

If publishers' perceptions of their audiences are correct, content preferences should exist between morning and evening readers. One might expect to find morning readers generally more interested than evening newspaper readers in reading about sports events and late-breaking news items. (This has in fact been found in one of the few published studies looking at morning and evening readers.[15])

Eighteen studies from 13 morning-dominant newspaper markets and eight studies from six evening-dominant newspaper markets looked at content preferences/readership/interests of their morning and evening newspaper readers.

Table 6 displays only the *number* of content preferences exhibited by morning and evening readers. It is important to remember that the unit of analysis for this table is not the market, but the number of findings, since more than one type of news content was generally included in each survey of readers. In Table 6, it is significant to note the number of content preferences there are among each of the three groups.

In morning-dominant markets, morning readers show the lowest percentage of distinguishable content preferences (23 percent or 70 findings), evening readers show the next highest proportion of content preferences (32 percent), and the maximum number of types of content are equally preferred by both morning and evening readers (46 percent).

For evening-dominant markets the relationship is the exact opposite: the most content preferences appear for morning readers (50 percent), the next largest proportion appears for evening readers (37 percent), and the least appear for those types of con-

Table 7

Content Readership/Preferences of Morning and Evening Readers

	Morning-Dominant Newspaper Markets Types of Content Preferred by:				Evening-Dominant Newspaper Markets Types of Content Preferred by:			
	A.M. Readers (n=70 findings)	P.M. Readers (n=98 findings)	No Difference (n=141 findings)	Total (n=309 findings)	A.M. Readers (n=64 findings)	P.M. Readers (n=48 findings)	No Difference (n=17 findings)	Total (n=129 findings)
Hard news[1]	26%	33%	35%	32%	42%	21%	18%	31%
Soft news[2]	44	60	43	49	48	63	71	57
Sports news[3]	30	7	22	19	9	17	12	12
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

[1]Hard news consists of general news, foreign news, national news, political news, editorial, op-ed, local news, state news, business news, labor news, stock lists, real estate and investments, etc.

[2]Soft news consists of tv news, entertainment news, culture/arts news, comics, participatory sports news, hobbies, coping/lifestyle/food/living/leisure time/other special sections, and "other" which consists primarily of vital statistics, obituaries and advertising.

[3]Sports news consists of high school, college and professional non-participatory sports such as baseball, football, soccer, wrestling, hockey, etc.

tent which are equally preferred by both morning and evening readers (13 percent).

When morning- and evening-dominant newspaper markets are combined, about one-third of the findings indicate morning readers have more distinguishable content preferences, another third indicate evening readers have higher content preferences, and the remaining third belong to that group of findings which show no content differences between morning and evening daily newspaper readers.

Assuming this table contains a representative sample of the types of content generally offered by newspapers, one pattern is particularly apparent: readers of the nondominant newspaper are more likely than readers of the dominant newspaper to show preferences for more types of content. The most likely explanation for this is that the nondominant newspaper is probably smaller in size and thus carries a lesser amount of most types of content than the dominant newspaper. This doesn't explain, however, why the majority of content in morning-dominant markets is equally preferred by both types of readers while in evening-dominant markets content distinctions between morning and evening readers are the norm.

Table 7 looks at the types of content which comprise these differences. This table shows that there are about the same proportions of hard news, soft news and sports items for both morning- and evening-dominant markets. Here it also can be seen that regardless of type of market, when a content preference emerges between morning and evening readers, the evening reader is more likely than the morning reader to show soft news preferences or preferences for news items which are not as dependent upon time for their newsworthiness. Table 8 breaks these broad categories down into eight specific news items.

These patterns suggest that content preferences do exist between morning and evening readers, and that morning readers have a slight tendency to prefer hard news items (in evening-dominant markets) and sports (in morning-dominant markets). Overall, then, readers of the nondominant newspaper are more likely to show a higher preference for hard news items and readers of the dominant newspaper are more likely to show a higher preference for sports news items. The patterns in these tables also suggest that regardless of which newspaper is dominant in the market, the evening reader is more likely than the morning reader to have a greater affinity for soft news items.

Attitudes/Images/Evaluations

The attributes used by newspapers in an effort to have their readers evaluate the newspaper they read are many and varied. An effort to consolidate these various rating instruments appears in Table 9. This table contains the findings of 13 morning-dominant markets providing 19 studies and six evening-dominant markets providing eight studies on evaluations of morning and evening readers toward their respective newspapers.

Table 8

Detailed Content Readership/Preferences of Morning and Evening Readers

	Morning-Dominant Newspaper Markets Types of Content Preferred by:				Evening-Dominant Newspaper Markets Types of Content Preferred by:			
	A.M. Readers	P.M. Readers	No Difference	Total	A.M. Readers	P.M. Readers	No Difference	Total
General/foreign/national/ political/editorials	6	16	17	39	11	6	2	19
State/local	5	9	11	25	11	2	1	14
Business/labor/stocks/ real estate	7	7	21	35	5	2	---	7
TV/entertainment/arts/ culture/comics	4	19	11	34	5	4	4	13
Coping/lifestyle/food/living/ leisure/hobbies	18	30	31	79	12	17	4	33
Participatory sports	5	5	11	21	2	2	1	5
Non-participatory sports	21	7	31	59	6	8	2	16
Other (obituaries, vital statistics, advertising)	4	5	8	17	2	7	3	12
Total findings	**70**	**98**	**141**	**309**	**64**	**48**	**17**	**129**

Table 9

Attitude/Image/Evaluative Ratings

Type of Ratings	Morning-Dominant Markets Higher Ratings Given by: A.M. Readers	P.M. Readers	No Difference	Evening-Dominant Markets Higher Ratings Given by: A.M. Readers	P.M. Readers	No Difference
Function of newspaper[1]	4	2	13	---	---	9
Function to reader[2]	12	8	7	9	3	6
Satisfaction with hard news[3]	15	8	14	5	---	---
Satisfaction with soft news[4]	8	8	10	---	---	---
Appearance/format[5]	4	1	2	---	---	2
Character of newspaper/ general ratings[6]	9	4	8	3	1	4
Total findings	**52**	**31**	**54**	**17**	**4**	**21**

[1]Function of newspaper attributes include accuracy, believability, up-to-dateness, unbiased, accessibility, fairness, protecting public, interpreting news, reliability, interest in the community, etc.

[2]Function to reader attributes include useful, entertaining, easy to read, easy to understand, useful advertising, addiction to paper, helping people cope, recommending to a friend, worth the time, worth the price, ratings on delivery, preference for morning or evening paper.

[3]Satisfaction with hard news includes satisfaction ratings on coverage of local news, foreign news, business news, political news, state news, sports.

[4]Satisfaction with soft news includes ratings on coverage of features, family life, hobbies, tv news, leisure activities, religion, health/medicine, eating out, travel, advertising.

[5]Appearance/format attributes include appearance, organization, format, article placement, good photos.

[6]Character of newspaper/general attributes include aggressive, conservative, friendly, interesting, modern, progressive, lively, old fashioned, improving, excellent, general satisfaction.

The most noticeable pattern is that regardless of which newspaper is dominant in the market, evening readers generally evaluate their newspaper higher on fewer attributes than do morning readers! In morning-dominant markets, morning readers rated their newspaper higher than evening readers on 52 attributes, compared to evening readers who rated their newspaper higher on 31 attributes. The same pattern is evident for evening-dominant markets: morning readers rated their newspaper higher on 17 attributes, compared to evening readers who rated their newspaper higher on only four attributes.

It is also important to notice that overall the number of higher ratings given by morning readers is about the same as the number of attributes rated equally by both morning and evening newspaper readers. What remains striking, however, is the consistently lower number of higher ratings given by evening newspaper readers.

Conclusion

These readership studies of markets supporting both a morning and evening daily newspaper do not paint a particularly bright portrait for evening newspapers. Their strong demographic base is composed of characteristics which are on the decline or which are more closely associated with non-readers of the daily newspaper. They have a greater affinity for the types of news not strongly correlated with daily newspaper reading frequency. Evening readers also have lower collective opinions of their newspaper than morning readers have of their newspaper.

These data, however, are descriptive, not predictive. Future research must move into more detailed explanations of why people read either a morning or an evening newspaper. □

Footnotes

[1]*Editor & Publisher International Yearbooks.*

[2]*Editor & Publisher International Yearbooks.*

[3]Newsom, Clark, "The Beat Goes on for P.M.s to A.M.s," presstime, Volume 2, Number 12: 48-49 (Dec. 1980).

[4]"Trend to A.M. Expected to Continue," *Editor & Publisher,* Jan. 3, 1981: p. 9-10.

[5]Bogart, Leo, *Press and Public.* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 1981.)

[6]*Editor & Publisher International Yearbooks.*

[7]*Advertising Age, Nov. 7, 1977, p. 36.*

[8]"Why Evening Newspapers are Hurting," *Media Decisions,* May 1978, p. 68-69.

[9]"ABC Panel Covers Pros and Cons of P.M. to A.M. Conversion," *Observations . . . Circulation Research Group,* Volume 11, Number 2 (1982).

[10]"Children and Newspapers," Newspaper Advertising Bureau, 1980.

[11]Stone, Gerald C. and Wetherington, Roger V., "Confirming the Newspaper Reading Habit," *Journalism Quarterly,* Volume 56, Number 3: 554 (Autumn, 1979).

[12]Magner, Ann and Mohn, Elsa, "The Changing Fortunes of the Morning and Evening Daily Newspapers and the Occupation of the Workforce," Sept. 30, 1981. Communication Research Center, Syracuse University.

[13]Brown, Robert U., "From P.M. to A.M.," *Editor & Publisher,* June 23, 1979: p. 40: "The key, however, seems to be that a newspaper can put out a better, more newsy product for morning readers than it can for evening readers."

[14]"A.M. Converts Laud Conversion from P.M.," *Editor & Publisher,* Oct. 10, 1981, p. 41. For an exception to this rule see "Reader Protest Brings P.M. Back to Life," *Editor & Publisher,* July 25, 1981, p. 13.

[15]Stone and Wetherington, p. 560: Morning newspaper readers' "interests included sports, business and the women's section. These content categories were contrasted with evening readers' preferences for what might be considered more time-consuming content such as features, comics, editorials, political columnists and classified advertising. In all, however, the morning versus evening readers' content preferences were more similar than different."